

Exhibit A

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SHERMAN DIVISION

THE STATE OF TEXAS, et al, §
Plaintiffs, §
vs. § Case No.:
GOOGLE, LLC, § 4:20-cv-00957-SDJ
Defendant. §

MOTION HEARING
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
BEFORE THE HONORABLE SEAN D. JORDAN
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Monday, May 6, 2024; 10:04 a.m.
Plano, Texas

APPEARANCES OF COUNSEL:
(Continued on page 2.)

FOR THE PLAINTIFF STATES:

W. Mark Lanier
THE LANIER LAW FIRM
6810 FM 1960 West
P. O. Box 691448
Houston, Texas 77269-1448

Zeke DeRose, III
THE LANIER LAW FIRM, PC - Houston
10940 W. Sam Houston Parkway N.
Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77064

GAYLE WEAR, RPR, CRR
Federal Official Court Reporter
7940 Preston Road
Plano, Texas 75024
gayle_wear@txed.uscourts.gov

1 FOR THE PLAINTIFF STATES:
2 (Continued from page 1.)

3 James Lloyd
4 Trevor Young
5 STATE OF TEXAS, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
6 ANTITRUST DIVISION
7 300 W. 15th Street
8 Austin, Texas 78701

9 James S. Renard
10 NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT
11 2200 Ross Avenue
12 Dallas, Texas 75201

13 FOR THE DEFENDANT:

14 Jamie Alan Aycock
15 YETTER COLEMAN LLP
16 811 Main Street, Suite 4100
17 Houston, Texas 77010

18 FOR MOVANT
19 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

20 Julia Tarver-Mason Wood
21 DOJ-Atr
22 450 Fifth Street NW, Suite 1700
23 Washington, DC 20530

24 ALSO PRESENT:

25 Attorney General Ken Paxton, State of Texas

* * *

1 May 6, 2024

10:04 a.m.

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3 P R O C E E D I N G S

4 ---o0o---

5 THE COURT: Good morning. Please be seated.

6 MS. WOOD: Good morning, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. We are back on cause number
8 4:20-cv-957, State of Texas, et al versus Google, LLC. And
9 we can start with appearances. And let's go ahead and begin
10 with plaintiffs.

11 MR. LANIER: Thank you, Your Honor. And with
12 appreciation, for having been gone the last hearing, I was in
13 trial with one of your federal judiciary people in Helena,
14 Montana, and I would have much rather been here.

15 I've got with me this morning Zeke DeRose from my
16 office. From the Attorney General's office we have Trevor
17 Young and we have James Lloyd. But we also have present
18 today Attorney General Ken Paxton. From Norton Rose
19 Fulbright, we have Jim Renard. And then the DOJ is a
20 separate entity, so I will let Ms. Wood...

21 MS. WOOD: Good morning, Your Honor. Julia Wood
22 from the Department of Justice, here on behalf of the United
23 States and the state plaintiffs in the EDVA action.

24 Thank you very much, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ma'am.

1 And welcome to the Attorney General.

2 And, Google, you're outnumbered again. Go ahead.

3 MR. AYCOCK: Good morning, Your Honor. Jamie
4 Aycock with Yetter Coleman, on behalf of Google.

5 And Mr. Yetter sends his regrets for not being able
6 to be here. He's in pretrial --

7 THE COURT: All right. Well, thank you, counsel.

8 And we have just one item on the agenda today. We
9 have a submission from the parties that is a Joint Motion For
10 an Order For Reproduction of Discovery. And we have the
11 United States that weighed in on this.

12 And so I think perhaps a useful starting point may
13 be for counsel to get me up to date on where we are with
14 regard to this particular motion. I did see the United
15 States' submission on Friday regarding the objections that
16 were made in the EDVA to the magistrate judge's decision, and
17 I believe that's been set for hearing.

18 But I'm happy to have comments from counsel on
19 where we are. Mr. Lanier, you can begin.

20 MR. LANIER: Thank you. Thank you, Your Honor.

21 And it's a pleasure to be back in front of you. We
22 appreciate the time and attention not only you, but Special
23 Master David Moran and his able cohorts have worked very hard
24 to get us here. The parties have taken an extreme number of
25 depositions in an extremely short time, as many as six and

1 seven in a day. And so it has been a lot of hard work by
2 both parties.

3 One of the concerns that prompted this from us, if
4 I could reduce this to a single sentence, it's that there is
5 a concern that we have an unfair playing field. And by that
6 I mean, this is a three-front war that is being waged, and
7 Google has the same lawyers in all three fronts. Google
8 knows what's happening in the MDL, and they're up on all that
9 discovery and the experts. Google knows what's happening in
10 the Eastern District of Virginia; they are totally up on all
11 that. Google knows what's happening in our case.

12 Our concern is we would like to make sure that we
13 get the expert reports that have been ordered by Special
14 Master Moran. We think we're entitled to those. We put
15 those arguments in front of you. You don't need me to
16 reiterate anything that you already know. You come in with
17 your homework done.

18 But I will say this. To the extent we can get
19 those, and we should get those, the reciprocity issue, going
20 back to the Eastern District of Virginia, is important, even
21 to us, because while that judge in the Eastern District of
22 Virginia regulates the docket over there, you regulate this
23 docket. You're not bound by a magistrate in Virginia.
24 You're not bound by a magistrate in Texas. You're not bound
25 by anybody. You run your court as the Article III Judge you

1 are.

2 And to the extent we believe we're hearing
3 inconsistent answers about documents and about positions in
4 the depositions we're taking, that have also been taken in
5 the Eastern District of Virginia, it's quite difficult for us
6 to be unable to flesh out those differences for impeachment
7 purposes because of limitations on sharing. And so what we
8 would like to do -- there are no limitations on sharing
9 within Google when they all have the same counsel. We just
10 want a level playing field. And that's our status.

11 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Mr. Lanier.

12 So Mr. Aycock, do you want to speak on Google's
13 behalf of where we are?

14 MR. AYCOCK: Yes, Your Honor. So I just remind the
15 Court this is a joint motion. The parties actually agree
16 here that the documents that we're seeking reproduction of,
17 they are relevant to this lawsuit. And so I agree with
18 Mr. Lanier, his comments, about the Virginia court regulating
19 its docket.

20 What's before this Court is whether the documents
21 that we're seeking reproduction of are -- should be within
22 the scope of discovery in this case. And so I just emphasize
23 that it's this Court that determines the scope of discovery
24 in this case, and it's the Virginia court that determines the
25 scope of discovery in its case.

1 This issue that's been raised about Google somehow
2 taking inconsistent positions, we don't think that's the case
3 in any way, and, in fact, that issue was raised before the
4 magistrate; that is before the Virginia court. I'm happy to
5 get into those, the details of that if that's where we need
6 to go. But what I would just emphasize is what's before the
7 Court today is simply whether these materials should be
8 produced in this case.

9 And so what should be before the Court, then, is,
10 is there -- if we produce those documents, is that going to
11 violate the protective order in the Virginia case, or is that
12 going to create an issue for the third parties whose
13 confidential information is at issue. And we think it's
14 clear there is no violation of the Virginia protective order.
15 In fact, the protective order contemplates that those
16 documents would be produced in other matters.

17 And then in terms of any concerns about third
18 parties' confidential information, those would be addressed
19 first, but the vast majority of third parties have actually
20 already consented. We are at the point where we have 115
21 consents. Only eleven parties have not fully consented at
22 this point; one of those is Meta that has agreed to a
23 narrowing; and one of those is Zulily, which is bankrupt, and
24 so it's just difficult to get consent. But the vast majority
25 have actually already agreed. And there is a process in the

1 proposed order by which any party that has a concern can
2 raise an objection.

3 So we think that's all that's before this Court,
4 and we think you should grant the motion.

5 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, counsel.

6 Is there something you wanted to say, Ms. Woods?

7 MS. WOOD: Yes, Your Honor. I will be brief. I
8 promise.

9 First, we thank the Court very much for the
10 opportunity to be heard on this issue. I want to make our
11 position on behalf of the United States and the State
12 Plaintiffs in the EDVA action very clear. We have no
13 opposition to coordination of documents and discovery between
14 this case and the EDVA action. What we do oppose, however,
15 is one-sided gamesmanship where one party is seeking to take
16 the benefits of that coordinated discovery without providing
17 the reciprocal benefit to the other side. That's what we
18 oppose. So how does that leave Your Honor?

19 I understand you're on a very tight timetable here,
20 as we are in the Eastern District of Virginia, and we don't
21 want to slow that down. We don't want to impede things. Our
22 number one goal in filing the material we filed with you was,
23 first, to make the Court aware of what was happening because
24 I do think we're in a situation where there's been the
25 ability to present different positions to different courts

1 and leave different impressions about what's going on, and we
2 wanted to stop that by making all courts aware what was
3 happening in each of the relevant jurisdictions.

4 But we don't have an objection to providing all
5 discovery -- not even just third-party discovery -- all
6 discovery from the EDVA action. We would not oppose it being
7 reproduced here, provided that this Court, which has
8 jurisdiction of its own protective order, carves out a
9 provision in that protective order to provide the ability of
10 the plaintiffs in the EDVA action to obtain deposition
11 transcripts. That would leave for the Court of Virginia to
12 decide how and whether those deposition transcripts could be
13 used at trial.

14 But it is this Court's protective order that
15 prevents us from obtaining the deposition transcripts in the
16 first place. And if we obtain them, and the Court in the
17 Eastern District of Virginia does not allow us to use them
18 for impeachment purposes, then we will be on a level playing
19 field with Google.

20 However, where we are now is they definitely get
21 the transcripts. It's unclear how or whether they'll use
22 them. And we believe this Court has within its sole
23 jurisdiction a construction of its own protective order to at
24 the very least allow the plaintiffs in the EDVA action,
25 including the United States, to obtain those deposition

1 transcripts that are occurring here. That is a restriction
2 that's contained in the protective order in this action, and
3 Your Honor has the power and the authority to modify that.

4 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Ms. Wood.

5 MS. WOOD: Thank you.

6 THE COURT: Let me visit with you all about what
7 about this order I find I guess a little bit puzzling. I
8 only say "puzzling" because I am wondering about the scope of
9 the order and its provisions, and I think you all will admit
10 it's an order that looks somewhat unusual in how it's
11 structured; and those go hand in hand.

12 And when I read the order and look at what's being
13 requested, my thoughts go back to first principles of
14 discovery for this case, for any case. So I think we work
15 backward from the fact that under Rule 26, for example, any
16 items that -- I use this by way of example -- that Google
17 wants to use and Google may want to put into evidence at
18 trial or before trial, those should be items that would be
19 part of their initial disclosures. Plainly, under Rule 26,
20 that is contemplated.

21 So to the extent that Google wants to use materials
22 that are gathered in the EDVA action or otherwise, and it
23 wants to use them as evidence in this case, then those are
24 part of initial disclosures which, you know, the parties have
25 an obligation to supplement.

1 Second, as to the States, if the States have made
2 requests for the production of materials that have been
3 produced in other litigation that are relevant under Rule 26,
4 then I would need to know the reason why those should not be
5 produced. And speaking to first principle, I would note as a
6 threshold matter that allowing the sharing of discovery among
7 related cases is an efficient and an effective means of
8 avoiding duplicative and costly discovery and avoiding
9 unnecessary delay in adjudicating cases.

10 There's many, many cases that stand for this
11 proposition. It's a proposition that's also in *Wright &*
12 *Miller*. I'm going to quote you from *Wright & Miller*. *Wright*
13 *& Miller* says one key consideration having to do with
14 potential modification of the protective order is that,
15 "Ordinarily, the most forceful case can be made for access to
16 use material as evidence in other litigation so that later
17 litigants do not have to," quote, unquote, "'reinvent the
18 wheel.'" This conclusion flows from the key purpose of
19 discovery -- to develop information for use in litigation.
20 It builds on a long line of cases recognizing the propriety
21 of access to the fruits of one litigation to facilitate the
22 preparation of other cases."

23 There are many cases that stand for this
24 proposition in Texas, and across the country candidly.

25 So I look at this request, which is very

1 specifically worded, and I think why aren't are the parties
2 simply asking for something that I think is more in line with
3 first principles under the rules, that is to say, if you need
4 such an order. And that would be such an order that would
5 require that documents from related litigation that are
6 otherwise relevant and non-privileged should be produced
7 according to Rule 26 with regard to initial disclosures, with
8 regard to any other rules of discovery such as requests for
9 production and interrogatories that are properly made.

10 Second, that if you're asking for that order and
11 the Court is ordering that that happen, that that be subject
12 to the provisions of protective orders in otherwise related
13 litigation, if there are protective orders in those other
14 jurisdictions that must be complied with, then that's
15 recognized. And that is something that's contained in, by
16 the way, the proposed order, and that makes sense to me.

17 We need to abide by the protective orders entered
18 in that related litigation as well as the protective order in
19 this litigation. And I note that we have a very robust
20 confidentiality order, we have a robust document on discovery
21 procedures, in this case, which I think touches on this
22 issue. I don't know if you all went back and read it, but it
23 does touch on this issue. We have a specific protocol for
24 expert discovery.

25 So my view of this for the parties is that I would

1 prefer to see you come back to this Court, and come back as
2 quick as you would like, but with an order that -- a proposed
3 order, if you feel you need it, that applies what I consider
4 to be basic principles of discovery under Rule 26, under case
5 law interpreting Rule 26 for decades. And if there's a
6 reason why -- if there's a reason why, or authority, that
7 would counsel otherwise that there is something about this
8 litigation, there is something about this case or other cases
9 that counsels that the Court should not follow those
10 principles of discovery, I'm happy to hear about it. I
11 haven't seen it in the filings that have been made.

12 And I appreciate the United States' position about
13 difficulties, from their perspective, of an unfairness
14 regarding the distribution of discovery materials across
15 these litigations. But as you all have agreed upon today, my
16 responsibility in this court, in this case, is to apply the
17 federal rules of discovery, and that is what I'm going to do.

18 So I'm happy to hear from any of you if you have a
19 concern about what I have suggested to you or if you
20 otherwise think there are reasons that the principles I've
21 articulated may not apply exactly in this case. But what I'm
22 suggesting to you is that you make an amended filing and that
23 that amended filing follow the rule, follow the precedent
24 that's interpreted the rule.

25 And the last point I would make is that I agree

1 with what counsel has said about the protective order at
2 issue in the EDVA and the coordination order there. The
3 protective order there, in the first place, only has to do
4 with confidential and highly confidential information; it
5 says nothing about other information that's otherwise
6 relevant and collected. That's number one.

7 Number two, what that order says, in paragraphs 25
8 through 27, about confidential and highly confidential
9 information is, as counsel have noted, that when there is a
10 court order or a subpoena that calls for information that is
11 protected under that order as confidential or highly
12 confidential, then the processes contemplated by that order
13 should be implemented.

14 I think those processes, again, are addressed in
15 the protocol I have in front of me. But I want to be clear
16 that the Eastern District's order is something that the
17 parties appear to have paid close attention to, and I think
18 any order from this Court would pay close attention to. But
19 I'm not going to over read that order, and I don't read that
20 order to apply, in the first instance, to nonconfidential or
21 highly confidential information, nor do I read it as some
22 blanket restriction on the use of such materials in other
23 litigation. Rather, it is meant to provide a protection for
24 nonparties should they be concerned about the use of material
25 collected from them in a related action or it can be used in

1 this action.

2 Likewise, I don't see anything in the coordination
3 order, which, by the way, was put into place at the time that
4 this case was part of the MDL, is no longer part of the
5 MDL -- as you all are very well aware, we are under no
6 coordination order at this time. There is no coordination
7 order between this litigation and any of the other cases
8 regarding these issues. So that brings me back to the
9 principle I stated before. My job is to apply the federal
10 rules, and that's what we're going to do.

11 Any comments you want to make on that, Mr. Lanier?

12 MR. LANIER: Yes, please. A, understood. B, we
13 will file an amended order, either agreed to or separately.
14 C, we know that today is the deadline under the rules for
15 Google to object to the special master's order granting
16 production of the expert reports from the Eastern District of
17 Virginia. It's still unclear to us whether or not there will
18 be an objection.

19 And, obviously, because of our time situation, with
20 you having espoused the rules that you have and gone back to
21 basic principles, we will be pressing that matter forward,
22 depending upon whether or not Google is going to make that
23 objection today. And our hope is is that we will, pursuant
24 to what you've just said, wind up getting, and getting
25 expeditiously, those things that we have a right to.

1 So thank you. And we will file an amended order.

2 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Aycock?

3 MR. AYCOCK: Your Honor, I am not prepared to
4 address whether we are objecting to the exhibit reports --
5 the expert reports, but I believe that we are not filing an
6 objection. I just want to make sure that I understand the
7 guidance from the Court, though --

8 THE COURT: Sure.

9 MR. AYCOCK: -- the proposed order, as we talked
10 with the plaintiffs. So my understanding is that Your Honor
11 is emphasizing the fact that we don't include in the proposed
12 order that agreement that the materials that we're seeking
13 reproduction of are relevant and not otherwise privileged.

14 Is that really the critical issue that Your Honor
15 is pointing us to?

16 THE COURT: Well, what I'm pointing you to is that
17 I think that whatever you propose should track what the rules
18 require and what the rules have interpreted they require.
19 And I spared you all some quotes from a number of different
20 cases that basically say that, you know, the sharing of
21 discovery among related cases is well-recognized and makes
22 good sense.

23 So again, my thought on this is if there is a
24 reason to treat this case or these different litigations in
25 another way, I haven't seen it articulated, and I would

1 consider it if you wanted to bring it forward to me. But
2 what I'm saying, to answer your question precisely, is I
3 think what you're submitting is something that tracks the
4 rules rather than being focused on, you know, X particular
5 document or group of documents; right?

6 What we're talking about is discovery, however it's
7 been collected, whatever it looks like, that is in related
8 litigation, if it would fall under Rule 26, if it would not
9 otherwise be problematic. For example, there are cases where
10 something would not have been discoverable in related
11 litigation or something like that, or where there's a thought
12 where you need to modify the protective order in a related
13 litigation for some reason, that's indeed the section of
14 *Wright & Miller* that I was looking at, is where you're
15 requesting a modification of a protective order in another
16 district, right, in related litigation.

17 And what *Wright & Miller* is talking about is a very
18 good reason to do that, to modify that protective order, is
19 so that you can fulfill this principle of litigation, which
20 goes back to rule one; right? This goes back to rule one,
21 that we try to move forward litigation as efficiently as we
22 can and not to do duplicative discovery, not to have
23 plaintiffs across different jurisdictions reinventing the
24 wheel.

25 So what I'm suggesting is you put it in those broad

1 terms subject to, for example, the provisions of the
2 protective order, which you have in there. I mean, those
3 provisions I think, you know, generally look fine. And now
4 the government has something -- the United States Government
5 has something it would like to see added. And I will leave
6 it to the parties to visit about that and present it to me if
7 that's what you want to do, or if you -- or if the parties
8 don't agree. The United States is here because it wanted to
9 give its expression of interest. So I'll leave it to you all
10 what you're willing to agree to and if the United States, you
11 know, wants to submit something in that regard.

12 But for my purposes, what I think should be
13 submitted is this type of order that tracks the rules. And,
14 look, I understand that it will be somewhat unusual because
15 you're essentially asking the Court for an order that says
16 follow the rules; right? That's what you're doing. That's
17 what I -- I understand that, but I am willing to look at an
18 order that says follow the rules and the interpretive case
19 law. And, you know, again, if there's case law going the
20 other way, I'm happy to look at it if somebody wants to
21 present it, I haven't seen it.

22 And so again I'd say we're going to follow the
23 federal rules, that's what I expect the order to present and
24 the Court to confirm by order. And I understand the purpose
25 here, right, because that is where you're tracking back to

1 the protective order in the EDVA and you're asking for an
2 order that says this is how we're going to proceed, and
3 that's why I'm willing to consider this order and because I
4 think it is then helpful for this Court and it's helpful for
5 other courts.

6 But, look, as you mentioned at the beginning of
7 this hearing, we're winding down the clock in this case. The
8 fact discovery period has ended. The Court has allowed some
9 additional specific discrete items of discovery to occur past
10 that deadline. We're into the expert phase.

11 I'm well aware that in the EDVA, discovery closed a
12 while ago. That case is getting ready for trial in
13 September. And, to my understanding, the MDL discovery
14 period is winding down. I think it's meant to end in June.

15 So I think, you know, in all of these litigations,
16 you know, I think we're at a point where, you know, the
17 collection and distribution of information that's needed by
18 the parties is something that everyone ought to be focused
19 on. And so that's the reason I'm telling you I'd like to see
20 this amended proposal rather than the current one.

21 MR. AYCOCK: Thank you, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Does that make sense?

23 MS. WOOD: Your Honor, just briefly?

24 THE COURT: Yes. Go ahead.

25 MS. WOOD: So thank you for that. I understand

1 Your Honor's instruction. And I just wanted to clarify the
2 role of the United States in that regard because I think we
3 do want to be a part of those discussions, again to ensure
4 that the spirit of the coordination that has always applied,
5 including when this case was part of the MDL, which is that
6 there would be a give and a take, and that both of those take
7 place to provide an efficient finding of truth across all
8 three cases. I think that is absolutely consistent with the
9 rules and the cases that Your Honor has referred to. And so
10 I do look forward to the opportunity to negotiate an order
11 that the United States feels serves its interests as well.

12 Thank you very much, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: All right.

14 The last thing I want to note to the parties is
15 that we've, you know, made limited exceptions on discovery
16 that had to do with certain depositions that I think just
17 could not be taken prior to the deadline, including
18 depositions that are still under dispute, by the way. And so
19 to the extent that this process, in putting this protocol in
20 place or this order in place and what comes from it, has any
21 kind of ripple effect on being able to complete other
22 discovery, you can let me know that.

23 Is there anything else we need to discuss today,
24 Mr. Lanier?

25 MR. LANIER: Not from plaintiffs, Your Honor.

1 Thank you.

2 THE COURT: Mr. Aycock, anything from Google?

3 MR. AYCOCK: Nothing else from Google. Thank you,
4 Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: All right. So my hope is you will get
6 that amended proposal to the Court sooner rather than later.

7 MR. LANIER: Your Honor, if we can't get it to you
8 today, it will be to you by 10:00 tomorrow morning.

9 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, counsel.
10 We'll stand in recess.

11 (Adjourned at 10:32 a.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

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4 I, Gayle Wear, Federal Official Court Reporter, in
5 and for the United States District Court for the Eastern
6 District of Texas, do hereby certify that pursuant to Section
7 753, Title 28 United States Code, that the foregoing is a
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13 Dated 8th day of May 2024.

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